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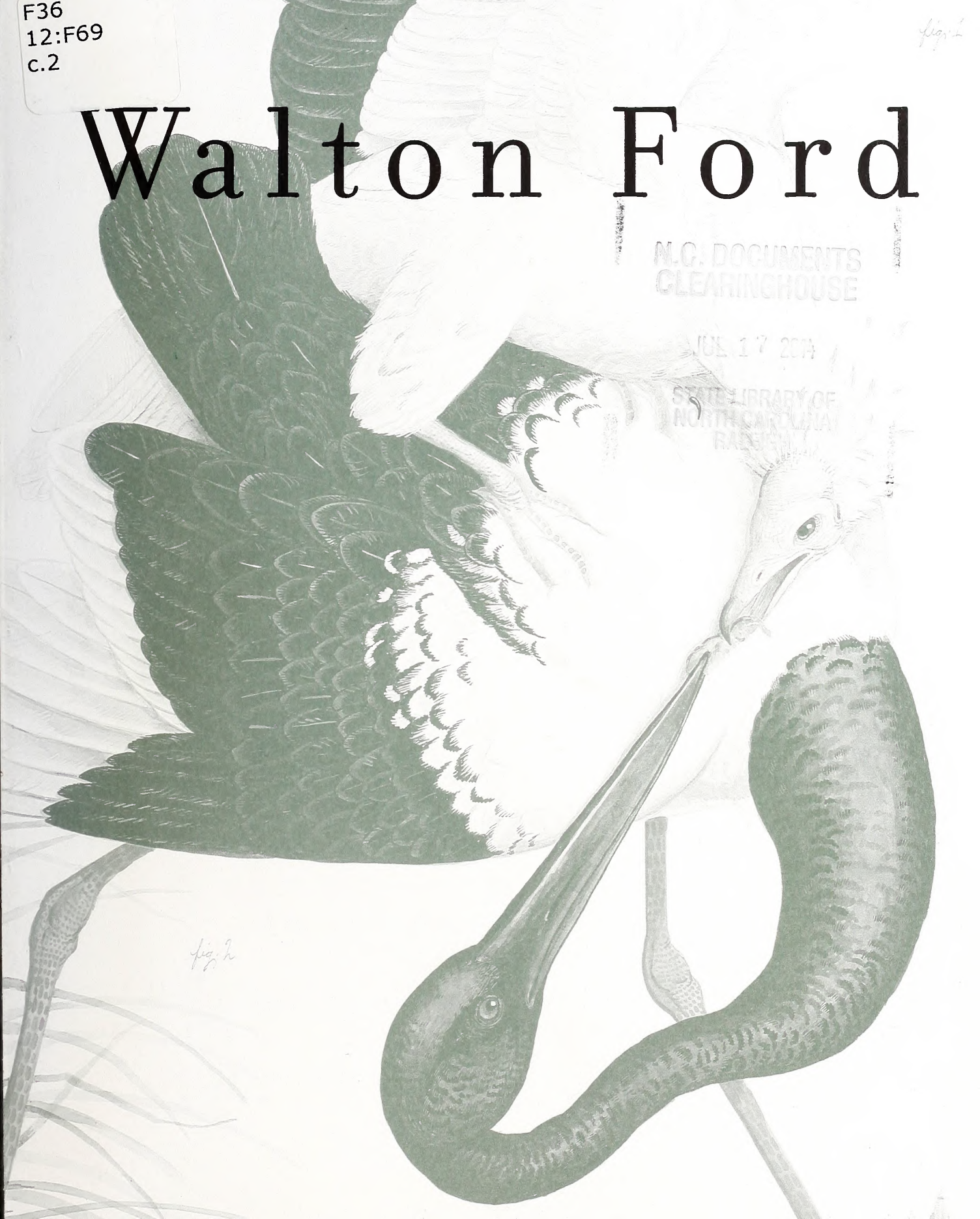
Walton Ford



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Walton Ford

Organized by Ron Platt, Curator

Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art

Walton Ford's work hangs on the notion of legacy. As the descendant of slave owners, his own legacy began on a Nashville, Tennessee, plantation. From his great-grandmother's diary, *The Autobiography of Emily Donelson Walton: 1837-1936*, came a story, frightening in its naiveté and abhorrent social attitudes. It is a story that is familiar to families across the South.

Ford is belligerent about his legacy, which he extends to encompass the history of America, from slavery in the South to the westward expansion. Recently, his focus has moved east to India, where the legacy of British imperialism still festers. Ford is masterful at loosening the underpinnings of the Western myth.

In 1996 Ford was one of eight artists whose work comprised *Heroic Painting*, which I organized for SECCA. Currently on tour, the exhibition pits "new history," which elevates the disenfranchised to heroic status, against traditional history in examining our mythic heroes. For Ford, the connection between myth and legacy is pivotal. In this, his first one-person museum exhibition, Ford fully examines the issues that motivate his work. It is with great pleasure that SECCA again presents this important artist.

Susan Lubowsky Talbott, Executive Director

Exhibition dates:

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At SECCA, I especially want to acknowledge Douglas Bohr for exacting registration and for so ably leading the installation of this exhibition in our galleries. Executive Director, Suzanne Farver of the Aspen Art Museum is responsible for bringing *Walton Ford* to Aspen, and I am indebted to her early and unwavering commitment to the project. Many thanks are due to Sheila Schwartz for editorial acumen and to Glenn Suokko for a sensitive and sophisticated catalog design. Walton Ford has been enthusiastic and endlessly patient throughout the organization of this project, and I offer him my highest appreciation.

R.P.

Walton Ford's reinterpretations of 18th and 19th century American landscape and genre paintings and naturalist watercolor studies are not nostalgic odes to the past. Liken them instead to the work of a time traveler who razes history to reenact events omitted from our texts and picture frames. Ford's work pointedly illustrates how the versions of history presented in books and paintings are cleansed of any content which might diminish the luster on our ancestral legends and heroes. He exploits the artistic genres which helped shape our national identity—the work of Hudson River School painters and itinerant frontier artists like George Catlin and John James Audubon—as well as painting's reputation for embodying "truths" in an era before photography and mechanical reproduction. Ford's ersatz artifacts create the illusion of first-hand observation—the illusion of truth—and thus call into question the veracity of the historic originals.

Beginning in the 1970s, a number of artists set about correcting history in dry, political works, often comprised of text and close-cropped, black and white photographic reproductions. Ford empathizes with this movement, though his strategies are decidedly more seductive. The visual pleasures of his works entice the viewer into considering their more subversive or skeptical content. Ford upends expectations through visual irony, prescribed in the form of extra-luminous sunsets, glaring spotlights, and Bruegelesque background follies, all seemingly rendered with an adolescent's relish for horror comic blood and guts.

Ford's earliest mature paintings de-romanticized the memories and mythicization of his own boyhood. Delving into his family's deep Southern roots, he came upon journals and letters which offered a sobering view into his family's slave-owning past. From their pages, the day-to-day atrocities of slavery emerged despite their authors' constant self-justification. Ford painted a series of family portraits based on these writings and old photographs titled *The Blood Remembers*. In them, insects emerge from the mouths of his ancestors, crawl down their collars, or buzz around their heads. The bugs are nearly obscured by furious scratches on the paintings'

surfaces. Ford's metaphor here is direct: if the family legacy remained intact, the bugs—the pesty truth—would eventually be altogether obscured. Instead of perpetuating his ancestral attitudes, Ford acknowledges the shameful aspects of his family narrative, thus inviting viewers to make inquiries into their own past.

This exhibition presents a selection of Ford's paintings, watercolors, and mixed media assemblages from the 1990s, which focus on the global legacy of Western imperialism, and particularly its effect upon the native people and animals of Africa, the Americas, and in his most recent work, India. We readily view the indigent people and animals Ford depicts as victims of opportunistic colonizers, yet Ford persuasively presents the Europeans' situation as well. Such considered characterizations establish a level playing field upon which we recognize our own culpability in perpetuating these troubling and inequitable cross-cultural relationships.

Ford's work of the early 1990s focused on the late 18th-and early 19th-century American frontier—depicted as a physical border between civilization and the "wild" West and as marking a tenuous line between our human and baser impulses. Dense, dark forests evoke the primal fears of American primitive paintings or Grimms' fairy tales, but they allude as well to the layers of ignorance and denial which obscure truth.

A body of paintings and watercolors from this period addresses the legacy of the naturalist artist John James Audubon, whom Ford recognized as a potent metaphor for our fledgling nation's expansionist philosophy. Ford counterbalanced the myth of Audubon—the fearless champion of North America's indigenous species—with a host of contradictory information culled mostly from the naturalist's own journals. Large-scale oils depict Audubon in the wilderness as if caught in action by another artist in his frontier entourage. Ford inserts into these paintings truths that the myth represses: moldering piles of animal corpses (Audubon rarely painted from life, and throughout his naturalist career made money selling furs and skins), or Audubon the sportsman, flushing bawling bear cubs from a burning tree.

Ford's animals and birds are intended simultaneously as fact and fiction—representing the actual beings while assuming metaphorical roles. His watercolors on the Audubon theme, for example, are rendered in the manner of Audubon's *Birds of America* portfolio, but they also allude to the darker undercurrents of Audubon's own mental landscape. The naturalist's written exploits provided Ford with bountiful evidence of a spirit cramped by the disciplines of civilization and propelled into the wilderness by dreams of wealth and recognition; of a man who reviled Native North Americans ("wolfish-looking vagabonds") and whose chronicling of fauna was inspired as much by sport and profit as by any love of nature. Ford's intent was not to slander Audubon but to counterbalance his legacy and the received myth of the North American frontier.

Ford's grimmest works were a series of mid-1990s paintings which explored the medieval European and early American practice of animal prosecution and execution. Looking like blackboards rescued from musty lecture halls, these paintings, including *A Guilty Cock* (1993), juxtapose the notebook recordings and specimen illustrations of a naturalist with renderings and written accounts of animals put to death for crimes they allegedly perpetrated. These absurd and grisly spectacles were common in the Middle Ages, crude morality plays intended to scare *humans* from sin and criminality. Even though this nation was founded on the notion of escaping such extremes of zealotry, spectacular punishments like these reached our shores as well; American icon Cotton Mather, for one, is on record as having condemned an entire barnyard of animals to death by burning. These gloomy works certainly point to the perpetuation of such brutalities in this country, despite America's reputation for religious tolerance. But Ford also intends them to question the validity of any scientific thought and practice determined by a religious doctrine which assumes man's dominion over nature.

A recent six months in India prompted Ford to consider the effects of Western culture on this five-thousand-year-old Asian civilization. He addresses the self-righteous bravado of Britain's "Indian campaign" in a serio-comic series of oils portraying tiger and boar

hunts gone terribly awry. Oblivious to the beliefs and customs of their new colony, the British big game sportsmen unwittingly conjure up the hideous and wrathful Hindu goddess Kali, bent on protecting her sacred domain. In these paintings, Ford ratchets up the graphic punch and gore of adventure comics while retaining the compositional sophistication of Western painting genres.

Large new oils and watercolors of India's native birds conflate two of the artist's earlier styles, the ornithological studies and the landscapes, thus creating virtuoso nature portraits as well as sly and unsettling meditations on India's dealings with Western consumer markets and attitudes. Brilliantly colored cranes, storks, and hornbills —portrayed life-size—represent India as monolith: a society steeped in nearly five-thousand years of cultural practice and beliefs that has weathered numerous invasions and occupations. Pestering the large birds are innumerable European starlings, a species introduced and now proliferated worldwide, which Ford trades on to great effect as a metaphor for the ubiquitous European presence on the Indian subcontinent. He inscribes Hindu and Buddhist texts and symbols, newspaper summaries, and naturalist's observations into the surfaces of these new works, creating a discordant welter of information which affirms the difficulties inherent in cross-cultural communication. These works reengage Ford in his earlier self-scrutiny and bring it up-to-the-moment, as he examines his own role as a Western tourist in India.

Whether "Old West" or East Indies, Ford is intent on demonstrating how the same cultural archetypes govern personal behaviors and customs as well as the construction and interpretations of history. He exposes some of the tacit yet pervasive imperatives by which Western society continues to define and justify itself. By revealing such conventions as slanted or fallacious and by linking the past with the personal and the topical, Ford opens the way for a more clear-eyed revision of history.

Abbe's First Defeat—1792

Pig-Sticking with Kali-ma

A Guilty Cock #1

Avatars: The Birds of India

The Householder

N. G. O. wallahs
1
2.
3.
4
5.
1 Indian Marabou (Adjutant) Leptoptilos Dubius
2. Indian Loriket Loriculus vernalis
3. Crimsonbreasted Barbet (Coppersmith) Megalaima haemacephala
4. Green Bee-Eater Merops orientalis
5. European Starling Sturnus vulgaris

N.G.O. Wallahs

Kathmandu Guest House

Acharya

Accounts –
1.
2.
3.
4.
1. Great Indian Bustard – Otis nigriceps
(India)
2. Great Spotted Woodpecker – Picoides major – male –
(Europe)
3. female
4. juvenile

Ron Platt: *In terms of the progression of your work, your focus has remained remarkably consistent.*

Walton Ford: Without a doubt. My first explorations were of my own family history, which included darker aspects of the American narrative like slave-owning. Mine is a very old family, and there's a tremendous pride for our Old South, antebellum roots. So my grandmother, my mother and my father they held onto that pride and passed it down to me. But what I found in my family's old writings didn't equate with what I'd been told, and as my feelings about my family became more ambiguous, I wanted to make work about that.

RP: *You've gradually expanded your examination from a personal to a more global perspective, progressing from investigating your family history, to this country's frontier history, and most recently to the effects of Western imperialism in India. Most all of your work has featured landscapes and animals. What led you to paint landscapes and animals to begin with?*

WF: As much as I heard I had a connection with Southern gentlemen like Robert E. Lee—Audubon was part of that, too. There's a whole Southern tradition of gun room art or sporting art—the Audubon that hangs above the fireplace, stuffed game birds—that sort of atmosphere. My family believed a true Southern gentleman would live like a British gentleman on a manor; he's both a sportsman and a naturalist. The more I read and learned about my background, the more disturbed I was by what props that kind of a life up, and that got me interested in making, basically, darker versions of the kind of pictures I grew up admiring, like the Audubons.

RP: *Did you think about how such an approach would be interpreted in a contemporary art setting?*

WF: I didn't really care. I've never really thought about whether something is going to function as a contemporary piece or not. The work that speaks to me most strongly is not contemporary. It's 19th-century naturalist prints or Audubon. A taste that I've always had for the grotesque gets layered over that. My fascination with the grotesque started as a child with comic books and horror movies, but I found out at some point that the most fantastic work of this kind was not in EC comics, but in Bruegel and Bosch in the 15th century. Underground cartoonists like R. Crumb know that. I wanted to make a sort of fusion between the subversive, outrageous qualities of an R. Crumb comic and this very proper natural history artwork that I grew up with—Stubbs horse prints or ducks flying across the marsh or Audubon. I really want to paint birds, I want to paint Bosch-like landscapes with fires in them, I want to paint dead animals covered with flies and blood. I'm going to do it one way or another. What's wonderful is that I'm finding good reasons to do it. It's not always a strategy, sometimes it's an obsessional thing, too.

RP: *The earliest painting in this exhibition,* Blanket *[1990], contains the sort of fiery, apocalyptic landscape that you just mentioned, as do a number of your works dealing with the colonial frontier. Just the opposite look, in other words, of Hudson River School landscapes with their vistas stretching to paradise. Did you have a particular narrative in mind when you painted* Blanket*?*

WF: It's not terribly specific, but *Blanket* is a piece about collecting. The blanket in the image is draped over a Native American figure, one of a group around a fire. I thought of that blanket as something that might be taken and end up in a museum. I was reading a Grimms fairy tale about someone with no fear, who couldn't tremble or feel any terror. He's given different recipes for how to make himself tremble and shake. One is to cut corpses down from trees, arrange them, and have dinner with them. I wanted to make this image of someone just sitting around a fire with American Indian corpses, calmly having a smoke. I was trying to get across the kind of bloodthirstiness it can take to put a good collection together. If you go to a place like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, think about the life history a piece might have. Collecting goes hand in hand with conquest ninety-nine percent of the time.

RP: *You did a series of work about Audubon: paintings which put you in the role of observing him in the wilderness and watercolors which look remarkably like his own. What were you getting at?*

WF: Audubon interests me because of his Americanism. There's something very crude about him in contrast to the elegance and sophistication of European naturalists such as Edward Lear. I like natural history art that's on the cusp of discovery. That's what Audubon is all about. He was the first European to describe many North American species, so there

Blanket (detail)

was an initial thrill of discovery mixed with "nobody's painted this thing before." That excitement interests me a lot. He wasn't a particularly gifted painter, but he was willing to paint a little more carefully and try a little harder than the other guy. He ended up winning the show in the end. He's consummately American that way. My watercolors were almost completely appropriated—done roughly the same size as his and in the same style. I wanted to learn how he did them. That group of pictures, of which *Night Hawks* is one, was more about his state of mind than his ornithological observations. I think Audubon was a very unstable individual—he was very violent, a liar, a really nutty, extremely difficult person. I wanted to make pictures of... almost his nightmares...what his psyche would look like if it was acted out by the birds he painted. So they're violent, mad little pictures that I did. I got some positive feedback. I felt encouraged to continue doing them.

RP: *So your treatments of Audubon and the birds were intended both literally and as metaphors or allegories. The watercolors depict the birds in such accurate detail; they're much more particular than we're accustomed to seeing in a contemporary setting. They combine a naturalist's eye with a fabulist's sensibility.*

WF: They become allegorical figures in the tradition of Grandville, Alice in Wonderland, Bosch, and Goya. That is the use of animals that interests me, that kind of storytelling. But I'm an amateur birdwatcher, too. The little bit I know I like to put into the pictures so that they get very specific about species, and there are jokes in them that would be appreciated by an ornithologist or somebody who knew a little more about birds than the average person. Species that don't interact or share habitat will interact in my pictures as a deliberate device. I want somebody to look at them and say, "Hey wait a minute—that species doesn't live there!" So whatever observations I make or bits I learn go into the pictures as much as possible.

RP: *The starlings are a prime example of your use of birds as metaphor. They're ubiquitous in the new paintings and watercolors of India's birds. You're using the starling as an allegory for European colonization and its legacy, aren't you?*

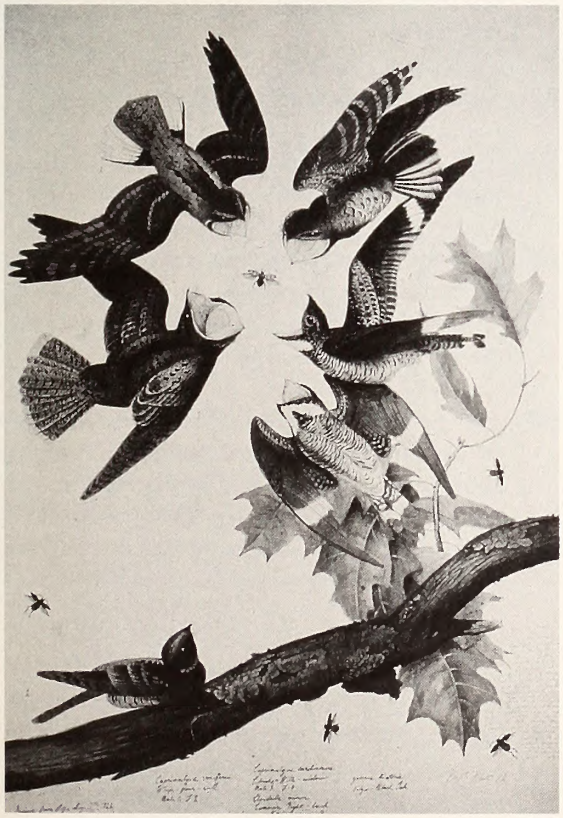
WF: There are starlings in parts of India, but they're primarily migrants. Generally they're a European species or a Eurasian species, and they've spread to other parts of the world, basically the same places that white people have gone.

RP: *Weren't they introduced into the U.S. for a very peculiar reason?*

WF: A guy named Eugene Schieffelin wanted to see all the birds mentioned in Shakespeare in Central Park. He introduced a number of non-native species, but most of them didn't survive. But the starling did—and spread. I have some wonderful old guidebooks to birds, and I have one, Chapman's *Handbook of Birds of North America*, the first edition of which is from around 1890. It mentions the starlings in Central Park. In the 1910 edition, they're in the Midwest, and in the later edition I have from the 1930s, they're in California. I guess they finally made it to Alaska in the '50s. They must be in South America by now. It's an extremely aggressive species, and it drives other birds from their nests. They've got it covered—they practice polygamy—there isn't a sin the starling doesn't embrace. But they can be really beautiful, gorgeous. Their song can be interesting but also really shrill and garbled. Like Anglo-Saxons, they've gone everywhere we've gone and displaced the native species.

RP: *A couple of years ago you went with your wife and daughter to India for six months. Since then most of your work has addressed India and the effects of Westernism on Indian society. In a way, your work has come full circle, from looking at your own ancestral history to our country's frontier history, and now, to a contemporary non-Western culture where you yourself are for the first time directly participating in the mix.*

WF: When you're in India, you're directly implicated because there is more of a caste structure in place. I was at the very top of the entire economic schema there. So many people depend on you for their livelihood because you're a tourist. That's very painful at times because there are nine-hundred million people there, a good third of whom live in a poverty that nobody in the West can conceive of. Their poverty line has to do with having enough calories, basically. But everybody knows about that India. What I didn't know anything about was that as a Westerner you're also considered an outcast—an untouchable—because they know you eat meat or wear leather. If you're talking to a Brahmin or a devout Hindu, they're being very kind just to deal with you. You're a pretty repulsive creature to them. Because I was not Hindu and I was out of my own culture, I didn't understand what was going on. You don't even realize it, but you're getting treated like an idiot, because to them you're behaving like one. So that's the other side of it. Westerners are an abomination and a source of income. There's also a certain amount of admiration because of the West's accomplishments. Every interaction is complicated by any number of elements. You're in the most basic interactions when you first get there and you don't know what's happening at all. Months go by before you start to figure it out. I left after six months having only scratched the surface. My role as a tourist is interesting to me because I was all of a sudden like a slave owner or something.



Night Hawks

RP: *Suddenly you're in the role of your ancestors on their Southern plantation...*

WF: Yes. I was the guy being pulled in a rickshaw by low caste people. A lot of my recent work has to do with tourism and with India opening its markets to the West, which is the new form of imperialism. India has until now kept her markets closed and protected her own industry—made Indian cars and television sets and soda. Indians played the USSR against the U.S. But now they're getting Coca-Cola. They're learning how to deal with capitalization and they're very savvy about it. They're taking it very slowly. Yet to me it's a scary new time for them and I'm sure to them as well. Capitalism likes to move so fast.

RP: *What do you consider the most lasting fallout from the British occupation of India? It's only been fifty years.*

WF: There's tremendous self-criticism among Indians. They're constantly pointing out their own shortcomings. Part of that is based on a sort of self-loathing that the British helped create, I believe. It wasn't a particularly healthy psychological relationship. It was like recovering from a bad or abusive relationship with an abusive spouse who takes away your self-esteem. That's the British legacy in my opinion.

RP: *And in all these new paintings and watercolors that legacy is perpetuated. Please talk a bit about* The Householder. *The habits of that incredible bird make it a perfect metaphor for the title.*

WF: It's a Great Indian hornbill in that painting, a very large flying bird. When they mate, the female excavates a large hole for herself in a rotten tree. She gets in, and the male and female together seal the entrance with mud, dung, and saliva, leaving just enough room for her beak to come out to receive food. She lays and incubates her eggs in there, then raises her brood. They receive all their food from the male through that little hole. I thought it was an

ideal metaphor for Indian *Householders*. In Hinduism you either renounce the world, or you take the path of the *Householder*, who has a wife and family yet is still completely within *dharma*. In other words, you can be a holy man and still have a family. But as India's markets open up, the promiscuous starlings are infesting this hornbill's world. Devout Hindus can be pretty outraged by the concept that "sex sells."

RP: *What about* Khatmandu Guesthouse?

WF: *Khatmandu Guesthouse* is just purely about cultural misunderstanding. It is like a self-portrait. It's me as a tourist. The lists at the top are all the restaurants and hotels in central Khatmandu in Nepal, and these starlings are seeing a stereotype of Asia—they're seeing the parrot and the minahbird—the easiest birds to see. But you might miss the extraordinary—like a bat with a four-foot wing span that eats fruit whole. The most interesting things are always what we miss. I know that's what I missed when I was in India. I know that the best in India and Nepal eluded me because of the position I was in. Because the only people I ever had anything to do with were the parrot and the minahbird—the hoteliers, the restaurant people, the servants. If you're there many years you may become a part of things. You're still the other, but you may gain some insights that you can't get in six months time. What set me apart a little from the starlings in that picture is that I know I was missing stuff. I wanted to paint birds—people—who had no idea what they were missing, who thought they were seeing the real India because they rode an elephant and saw the Taj Mahal. It's wonderful to do those things, but the fruit bats—the metaphorical fruit bats—would definitely get away.

RP: *There's something about the light in* Acharya, *another new painting, that I find very odd.*

WF: Well it has a couple of different light sources. That's one odd thing about it. It's artificially lit in a really technical way, like what happens if you take a flash photograph of someone in front of a sunset. They become illuminated from the front with white light while behind them there's all this warm light. I was interested in painting that color effect. Its something that happens in snapshots.

RP: *Something that happens a lot to novices and tourists.*

WF: Something that happens to tourists—yes. *Acharya* is a painting of a saurus crane, a very large Asian crane. It's a painting about how so many people going East for enlightenment rarely find it. I heard a great Indian anecdote, a little story about a Western woman who goes to a guru and goes on and on about her problems. He listens to her and then turns to his assistant, "What does this woman expect me to say? She needs professional help." The point is that if you are going to gain insights like a Dali Lhama, like a Hindu sadhu, you have to be incredibly strong. You're liable not to get any enlightenment in India at the feet of a guru whose traditions go back four-thousand years when you're on holiday and sick from food you're not accustomed to. The crane with those needy starlings all over him doesn't care whether they're there or not. He's oblivious. India seems infinitely patient with people searching for themselves.

RP: *The crane's looking up to god?*

WF: He's out of his body already. I met Indians who think of nothing but preparing for their death.

RP: *The great bustard in* Accounts *is gazing skyward too, but he doesn't seem so resilient as the saurus crane. He looks as if he's about to hemorrhage from all the holes the woodpeckers have drilled into him.*

WF: He's just bleeding a little. The British learned when they got to India how intractable the Indians were about certain things. They've absorbed many influences for many centuries. The woodpeckers and starlings are just another passing thing. But the great bustard is ancient India. He'll be standing there forever.

The Householder, 1997, oil on wooden panel, 63 x 46"
Courtesy of Janice and Mickey Cartin, West Hartford, Connecticut

Acharya, 1997, oil on wooden panel, 63 x 46"
Courtesy of a private collection, Colorado

Kathmandu Guest House, 1997, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 60 x 40"
Courtesy of Steven Katz, New York, New York

N.G.O. Wallahs, 1997, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 40⅜ x 29¾"
Courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, New York

The Last Freedom Fighter, 1997, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 41½ x 29⅞"
Courtesy of a private collection, New York

Abbe's First Defeat—1792, 1996, oil on wooden panel, 36 x 46"
Courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, New York

Pig-Sticking with Kali-ma, 1996, oil and sindoor on wooden panel, 24 x 19"
Courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, New York

Compassion, 1996, oil on wooden panel, 24 x 19"
Courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, New York

All Beauty, 1996, oil on wooden panel, 24 x 19"
Courtesy of the artist

Diagnosis, 1996, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 40½ x 26"
Courtesy of Madison Cox, New York, New York

Na raamro, 1996, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 41 x 26"
Courtesy of Beth Rudin DeWoody, New York, New York

Avatars: The Birds of India, 1996, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 40 x 59"
Courtesy of Janice and Mickey Cartin, West Hartford, Connecticut

A Collection from the American Wastes, 1993, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 59½ x 40"
Courtesy of the artist

A Guilty Cock #1, 1994, oil on wooden panel, 60 x 40 x 2"
Courtesy of Janice and Mickey Cartin, West Hartford, Connecticut

Lead Poisoning, 1994, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 40 x 60"
Courtesy of Mark Fenske, Malibu, California

Night Hawks, 1993, watercolor on rag paper, 30¾ x 44½"
Courtesy of Nicole Klagsbrun, New York, New York

False Face/Health Advisory, 1993, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 132 x 148"
Courtesy of the artist

Procrustes in Africa, 1993, tripartite mixed media construction, installation dimensions variable.
Courtesy of the artist

Procrustes in Africa—Female, 75 x 47¼ x 26¼"

Procrustes in Africa—Male, 80 x 48 x 26¼"

Procrustes in Africa—Young, 65 x 38 x 26¼"

Pan, 1993, watercolor, gouache, ink, and pencil on paper, 59½ x 40"
Courtesy of the artist

Blanket, 1990, oil on wooden panel, 47¾ x 64¾".
Courtesy of Roger Altman and Jurate Kazickas, New York, New York

All works photographed by Adam Reich and courtesy of Paul Kasmin Gallery, except *A Guilty Cock #1* photographed by Ed Thomas Photography; and *Blanket* and *Nighthawks* photographed by Peter Muscato.

Walton Ford is represented by:
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Born in White Plains, New York, 1960

Lives and works in Hillsdale, New York

Education

1982 BFA, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

European Honors Program, Rhode Island School of Design, Rome, Italy

Selected One and Two-Person Exhibitions

1997 *Recent Paintings and Watercolors*, Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, New York

1995 *Walton Ford, Jimmie Durham*, Ho Gallery, Hong Kong

1993 *Procrustean Beds*, Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York, New York

Walton Ford and Julie Jones, The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. Travelled to Virginia Beach Center for the Arts, Virginia (catalog)

1991 Bess Cutler Gallery, Santa Monica, California, and Bess Cutler Gallery, New York, New York

1990 *The Blood Remembers*, Bess Cutler Gallery, New York, New York

Selected Group Exhibitions

1996 *Landscapes*, Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, New York

Heroic Painting, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Travelled to Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, Florida; Queens Museum of Art, New York; Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, Tennessee; The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, Nevada; University Gallery, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts; Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, Illinois. (catalog)

1995 *Next of Kin*, MIT List Visual Art Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (catalog)

A Vital Matrix, Domestic Setting, Los Angeles, California (catalog)

1994 *Ashley Bickerton, Jimmie Durham, Walton Ford, Jeff Wall*, Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York, New York

History 101: The Re-Search for Family, The Forum for Contemporary Art, St. Louis, Missouri (catalog)

1993 *Living with Art: the Collection of Ellyn and Saul Dennison*, The Morris Museum, Morristown, New Jersey

Kurswechsel, Michael Klein, Inc. at Transart Exhibitions, Cologne, Germany

1992 *The Landscape as Stage*, Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1991 *Junge Americanische und Deutsche Malerei*, Galerie Schulze, Cologne, Germany

In the Looking Glass: Contemporary Narrative Paintings, Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina

1990 *A Sense of Place*, Montgomery Museum of Fine Art, Montgomery, Alabama

Brut 90, White Columns, New York, New York

1989 *American Pi(e)*, Bess Cutler Gallery, New York, New York

1988 *Un Regard Autre*, Farideh Cadot Gallery, Paris, France

Ten Painters, White Columns, New York, New York

1987 *Representations of Masculinity*, The New Museum for Contemporary Art, New York, New York

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Cameron, Dan. "Ode to Discernment," *Frieze*, January/February 1994.

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Falkenstein, Michelle. "Shiva's Pets," *New York Press*, April 23–29, 1997.

Liu, Catherine. Exhibition review, *Artforum*, May 1990

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Ziolkowski, Thad. "Walton Ford," *Artforum*, February 1994.

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